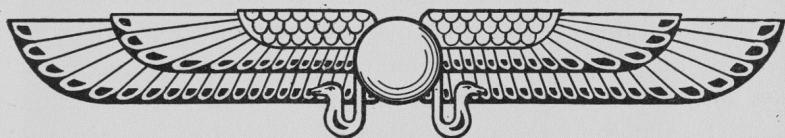


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF :

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +
+ EDITH SEARS, +
+ + MARIE A. WALSH.

VOL. II. SAN FRANCISCO, AUG., 1895. NO. 1.

SALUTATORY.

THEOSOPHICAL evolution proceeds in hidden lines of force, coiling on itself, biting itself like the cosmic serpent ; shedding its skin periodically ; and every change emerging from itself a new being. But the one Divine Purpose unites all the powers of nature to the same end ; namely, that by experience of the changes inherent in life, Man may learn the one truth underlying its passing forms. Forms must change, disintegrate. Disintegration brings pain and sorrow. The human soul with its limited vision trembles ; it fears the death of its loves, its idols. But the Divine Ego proves that the result of disintegration is not death. No, it is birth—birth into a broader, deeper life. With the new day, comes a new era. Through such a crisis of disintegration the Theosophical Society has just passed, only to arise to a new life, stronger, wiser, better able to pursue its destiny of spiritual attainment.

The purpose of Theosophic teaching is to gain knowledge of Truth. This knowledge is gained by assimilating useful experiences. The past has been but the foundation of the Temple of Wisdom—the future will build that Temple. Broader application of ideals will bring greater opportunities for all who strive for Truth. The principle of true Brotherhood will guide the race to the peace which comes of true living.

Theosophy has only begun its work. To-day, humanity hungers for spiritual food as it never hungered before. The duty of the Theosophical Society is to satisfy that hunger; for Theosophic science and philosophy alone point out the means through which man may attain to the perfect harmony of life—that harmony which results from the purification of all desire, its transmutation into spiritual force in the alembic of spiritual fire.

Theosophia is the living chain linking together all forms of thought. It is essential religion—the basis of all creeds. It is the magnetic center from which polar differences proceed and by which they are united. It is Unity, Rhythm, Progress. Hence, Theosophy is constructive; its aim is to build, to unite, to seek Truth, which is the One Reality.

It is the spirit of affirmation as opposed to the spirit of denial. To realize this concept of Theosophic teaching will be the constant endeavor of MERCURY.

Our policy will be that of tolerance, tolerance in thought and word and brotherly hospitality towards all who have the cause of Truth at heart. Hence, all personal controversies and antagonisms will be most scrupulously avoided. By keeping clear of these dangerous subjects we can keep the pages of MERCURY open to the discussion of all ideas connected with the cause of the advancement and enlightenment of humanity.

Besides articles from well-known exponents of Theosophic thought, MERCURY will have a department of Practical Theosophy, in which its ideals will be applied to the many problems of life in all its phases, from the family hearth to the state-house, from the plough to the rostrum. Next month, under approval of our General Secretary, Mr. Fullerton, the Forum will be continued from No. 70, Question CCCXXXIII. This department will be afterwards reprinted in book-form and furnished to all members of the American Section. The Children's Corner will be continued on the same lines as those of last year. Stories of the Great Religions and Religious Teachers will form a feature. One item of use and interest will be the Book Reviews, including notes on all current literature of a Theosophic tendency. This department will be in charge of Mrs. Edith Sears of Chicago.

Another department, entitled "Behind the Veil," will take up the

third aim of the Society—The powers latent in Man. Some may consider this departure dangerous, and for that very reason it becomes imperative for Theosophic exponents to discuss Psychic States calmly, and from a natural and scientific point of view.

With the advent of invisible forces, such as electricity, as factors in the world's social life, there has come an awakening of inner perfection that is rapidly changing man's relation to the so-called invisible world.

The veil of material sense lifts and startles even the materialist with glimpses of the great Beyond. Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Telepathy, Hypnotism, Psychometry, are acknowledged facts, though yet unexplained, little understood, and therefore looked upon with much misgiving. And with reason, for this indistinct seeing, hearing, feeling, this wandering in the misty land "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," is fraught with danger. It needs a sure guide. Can Theosophy be this guide? Most assuredly it can. Its philosophy of our seven-fold nature, its science of consciousness, will explain these mysteries of the soul and guide the wanderer through the misty land until the soul's senses, educated, disciplined, will be able to see clearly and to direct its course to the Center of Light.

MERCURY has descended from the globe. He now stands, clothed in virile strength, by the Pillar of Time, pointing to that future which holds within it perfected humanity. Above him the Aum, mighty symbol of Creation, Preservation, and Death; of the out-breathing and inbreathing of Brahm, the secret of which transforms Mercury into Hermes the all-powerful.

The word is now given unto him, the word to speak to old and young. May that word be for blessing, for pointing out the way. Dear readers and co-workers, MERCURY gives you greeting in the voice of the American Section of the T. S., that voice which declares in clarion tones, "The Theosophical Society—one and indivisible throughout the world."

Then the lord of all creatures said to those assembled together: "You are all greatest and not greatest. You are all possessed of one another's qualities. All are greatest in their own spheres, and all support one another. There is but One, and I only am that, but accumulated in numerous forms."—*Anugita*.

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

A LECTURE BY ALEXANDER FULLERTON, F. T. S.

IN the history of the human mind, most particularly in the history of the human mind in its relation to religious problems, there occur at intervals great crises, momentous epochs when venerated opinions are brought face to face with sharp denials of them. Naturally, these are preceded by long eras during which a preparatory process is going on. Abuses have been ripening, doctrines have been growing in exaggeration and artificiality, the practical effects of creeds or cults have been disclosing themselves, orthodoxy has been supplanting morals as the test of merit. And, on the other hand, there has been a weakening of the ecclesiastical spirit, popular intelligence has so far strengthened as to become critical of established beliefs and impatient at the assumption that they must be right, reason has begun to rise in its might, and conscience to struggle against impositions. Thus, both the evils of dogma and a sense of them have alike grown till neither can longer be ignored, and then the two confront each other with a decision which means a conflict.

The historic record shows instances both in the displacing of one religion by another and in the successive crises in the career of individual religions. Of course, Christianity gives the most familiar illustrations of each. The old classic faiths had become very grotesque and very foolish. Much of their poetic beauty had been lost through gross materialization, the gods and goddesses have lapsed into very commonplace personages, far from elevating as ideals, and by no means contributing to sound morals or popular conscientiousness. The element of unreality had so pervaded the whole of mythology that the philosophers hardly pretended to show religion more respect than was exacted for it as an agency in controlling the lower classes. The augurs could not look each other in the face without laughing, and the priests had no more conception of spirituality than the animals they sacrificed. But then, as at all times, there were in every community sincere men, men of religious principle and sound conviction, to whom frivolity was repulsive and humbug odious. With deep respect for the spiritual nature in man, sure that there must be somewhere a truth and a reality which could nourish devotion

and satisfy conscience, they rejected the absurdities around and were alert for the first rays of light in the pitiable darkness of the age. When, then, the pure and gentle teaching of the Galilean reformer was wafted along by such voices as Paul's and John's, they grasped it as the very fact they had desired, instantly sensing its moral worth and spiritual vigor. So, in great measure, the earliest converts were of stern and genuine material, not lovers of mere novelty, but earnest welcomers to the true and real. They were not usually of the cultured classes, for culture had rather produced indifference, but mostly of simple folk who were sound of heart, only an occasional philosopher being among them. As, however, the new religion gained strength, took more definite form, acquired a distinct doctrine and a ritual worship, as its numbers and activities and boldness grew, it became matter of common notoriety, and the latent or avowed discontent with established beliefs were stimulated into a face-to-face meeting.

Very early, indeed, in the history of Christianity corruption in the Church began to manifest itself, and this was enormously fostered by two powerful influences which soon came about—the steady development of an ecclesiastical system, and an alliance with the State for its forceful support. After those, degradation went on apace. Yet all through the centuries there were sporadic uprisings of good against evil, temporary protests of individual men or organized sects, both usually suppressed by the union of the ecclesiastical anathema with the civil sword. We have lost sight of these because of the greater instance in the 16th century—an instance so momentous that it rent asunder Western Christendom and changed the whole civilization and literature of Europe. Long stretches of corruption and tyranny in the name of religion had prepared the way for far-reaching revolt, and then the accumulated discontent burst forth from every honest soul which had felt the pressure of monstrous dogma or the iron of sacerdotal bondage. The Reformation meant centuries of wrong, volumes of resentment, and an outbreak of resistance.

In every such case of religious crisis, a serious question at once forces itself upon the participants. Shall all the old past, with its commingled mass of goods and evils, healthful institutions and debilitating influences, sacred memories and degrading ones, happy,

joyful, uplifting, bright, sad, depressing records, the tender associations of childhood and the exasperating experiences of maturity, be deliberately severed? Shall the familiar scenes be put an end to, venerable opinions cancelled, solemn rites terminated, hallowed observances be placed under ban? Shall the whole apparatus of thought and worship be at once banished, and a totally new one be constructed from the fresh material now commending itself to conscience and reason? Or shall only so much of the old and deleterious be effaced as is imperative, the framework of the structure remaining, but decayed or unsound parts replaced by strong and valid stuff? Is there to be not destruction but reconstruction, amendment, preservation of what is valuable, regard shown to antiquity and sentiment? To use the metaphor of Jesus, is the new wine to be poured into the old bottles, or must wine and bottles be alike new?

This question has confronted every serious reformer, and the more serious his spirit the more serious the question. To the indifferent, the superficial, the frivolous, the question has no moment. If a man cares nothing for distinctions in religious conviction; if he thinks such affairs of no practical value; if to him all creeds are equally unprovable and equally worthless; if he disposes of the matter with an airy shrug or a disdainful smile—the point at issue has no importance. The wine is a growth of sentimental fancy, the bottles a device of perverted scholasticism; whether either endures, or both, is without consequence; another generation will probably displace each for its own. Why waste time on discussing a compromise, when the matter is trivial and in no way affects real interests?

Nor will the question concern those who deny the genuineness of the new wine or the degeneracy of the old bottles. The conservative holds that the newness of the wine is the best proof that it is spurious, the oldness of the bottles their strongest attestation. A doctrine that is grown in the fields of reason and conscience and the moral sense, under the brightest skies of welcomed truth and under waterings from the latest knowledge and the freshest experience, must be a very different product from that grown on the soil of Theology and certified to by doctors long in their graves. Suspicion must surround it; it has not the flavor of antiquity and

historical consent; it has the vivacity of youth and lacks the placidity of age. And why impugn the excellence of the bottles which have for centuries contained the vintage of the good old days, the times of Faith, bottles elaborated by the choicest minds, and adopted by the greatest saints, and sealed with the solemn asseverations of Councils guided by a Divine influence? Surely, it must be the rashest of irreverence which could suspect them or decry them—much worse, dump out their contents and then toss them on the shelves of ecclesiastical museums! And so he who devoutly holds fast to creeds and opinions because they have been ages in existence, and who clings to their verbal expression because that has been affirmed by instituted religion in its most authoritative shape, has no interest in the question of change or combination, but insists that the wine and the bottles will last his day, as they have done for so many who are now peacefully at rest.

But to the mentally-awakened, the spiritually-aroused, the question is very vital indeed. Its bearings are far wider than sentimental. Of course, there may be a lingering fondness for the beauty, tenderness, consolation of the old faith; its sacred associations and long charm cannot dissipate suddenly away; its roots extend far through memory and habit and affection. Still, this is a personal matter. If clearly seen to be an obstacle to progress, it might be deliberately removed by an output of will. But what if the old faith contains really truth which should not be effaced, a solid fact which the world needs and which is essential to its highest purpose and richest aspiration? Would it not be a mistake to give free rein to iconoclastic zeal and shiver indiscriminately all that was once so hallowed and could not have been if without some merit? Moreover, can any rooted habit be torn from the mind unless with a laceration which would unfit it for new functioning till long time had passed? If so, if the ruthless destruction of the old fabric would deprive men of much that is good and true, if so sudden an overturning might either create a revulsion or postpone a rebuilding, might it not be wiser to discriminate, to save meritorious parts, to make an end only of the worthless? The new wine could be judiciously introduced into the partially-emptied skins, the skins themselves manipulated into better forms, more pliable, less harsh. Gradually the new wine

would displace its predecessor, the old bottles become virtually fresh.

[To be Continued.]

BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

A Dream.

Dear Mr. Editor :

Recently I had a peculiar experience which leads me to suppose there is something to be discovered from dreams. In a few words, the dream is as follows: I saw, in my dream, a book filled with curious illustrations as well as facsimilies of writing. The writing appeared so peculiar and impressed itself so vividly upon my mind that on awaking I arose from my bed and drew on a piece of paper a duplicate of the writing as seen in my dream. Some time after I saw a book similar to the one seen in the dream, and on opening the same discovered that the printed writing corresponded exactly to the sketch drawn by me from the impression left by the dream. I may add that the book seen treated of a subject in which I was interested.

Can Theosophy suggest any explanation of this peculiar experience.

Yours Sincerely,

B. J.

To B. J. :

Certainly, Theosophy offers an explanation. Dream-life is a state of consciousness far less limited than that of our waking condition. According to the teachings of the Wisdom Religion, Consciousness differentiates into several phases. These phases may be likened to circles within circles touching each other at one point. The largest circle, the most extended phase, is that of Spiritual Consciousness, while the smallest and most limited is that of our physical brain consciousness. Science acknowledges some of these circles and calls them planes of sub-consciousness or submerged personality.

The consciousness of the dream state is a larger circle than that of our waking life. Physical limitations of time and distance do not affect it. Our loves, hopes and fears form its horizon. Now, any gathering of forces around an object which is the center of intense thought or feeling on the part of an individual attracts this expanded consciousness of dream-life ; and the soul functioning in that peculiar state of consciousness perceives whatever may be going to happen to that much-thought-of object. It sees the danger, it feels the joy that may be focalizing around the person or idea. Distance is *not*. Wherever the thought goes, there is the soul.

But in order that this consciousness be registered on the physical brain consciousness, as it evidently was in your dream, the two circles or spheres of waking consciousness and dream consciousness must be in active sympathy one with another. They must vibrate together ; then, on waking, the brain is still vibrating with the impressions it has received from the dream consciousness, and the mental pictures perceived in dream are remembered in the waking state. This synchronous vibration is a rare experience ; else the soul's broad expanse of vision in dream life would be an invaluable guide the maya of physical life.

One of the aims of yoga practice is to keep ever active this sympathetic point of contact between the circles of consciousness, or, in other words, to attune the physical brain to the pitch of the spiritual consciousness, so that it can at will be made to vibrate in harmony with any plane.

M.

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

This department is intended to be one of actual experience. Any items showing the aid Theosophy gives in daily life will be welcome.

THEOSOPHY AS A GUIDE IN LIFE.

HELP Nature and work on with her ; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

I am not much of a student, but I am heart and soul in Theosophy. At first it seemed hard lines that I should have to pass my days in this fierce strife of the world. Yet common sense told me that bad as the strife is, we should not be in it if it were

not our place. Our Karma has brought us into this hell because we have helped to make a hell. The sooner we begin to unmake it the better for us and the world, and the sooner we shall get to those mountain tops where the Masters dwell.

But it is cowardly to want to get there before we have done our share of world-cleaning. A shirk can't be a candidate for Adeptship. That is what common sense told me. I understood that the duty of a Theosophist was to endeavor to change the direction of the world's thought; to turn it from material, selfish, separateness to spiritual, selfless unity. A pretty big task; and the question was, how and when to begin? When a Theosophist earnestly asks a question an answer soon comes. The answer came to me in a lecture—"In all your relations with men and women look upon all as a part of yourself; know that they, with you, form the great planetary man. Speak ever to the Higher Self of each; for then you meet your true self. All selves are rays of the *One Sun*."

Immediately, I made up my mind to carry out that suggestion. It was pretty hard at first. I put the idea into a set formula that I forced myself to repeat to myself before speaking to any one. Perseverance conquered.

After a time, I found myself smiling at acts and words that would have irritated or angered me before. Was not the wrong word spoken, the wrong act done, by myself—a part of myself?

Then I began to discover the good qualities of these parts of me—of these other selves. When I spoke to the Higher, the Higher responded. The world is not so bad, after all. Harrassments decreased; the business machine ran much smoother. A new interest came into business; I no longer bought and sold for people simply to make money. I worked for each one as for myself. Their interests became mine.

As this attitude of thought became more and more intense it seemed to be a magnet drawing to me many a confidence. In this way I am able to drop a seed here and there. Some of these seeds flourish.

My office is now a happy place, the abode of peace, in spite of its commonplaces and its money-getting.

R. J. S.

* * * It seemed to me that I was not progressing at all, that at every step I tripped and frequently fell. How difficult this ceaseless strain, this ever striving to reach the flame. My human soul groaned in anguish. How infinitely sad this life of world illusion!


I looked around and saw the grass and flowers rejoicing in rain and wind as in sunshine. They bent and swayed, trembled with joy, and they grew. "Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously."

The lesson came with overwhelming force. I saw myself fighting, repelling the rain-drops, seeking the sun with fevered intensity—that is not the flower's way.

Then my soul grew peaceful. It became pliant, gentle, yielding as a blade of grass. It learned to drink in the rain with delight, to bend lovingly to the winds—to cease its straining search for the sun, content in the knowledge that the sun shines away. Does it grow? It asks not—it lives to love and bless life—life in its thousand manifestations. One in many; many in one.

E. F.

AROUND THE ZODIAC.

 ON August 22d, the sun is said to enter the Zodiacal sign Virgo, in which it remains until September 21st.

Virgo represents the Mother-Waters out of which sprang the earth. It is the Astral Light; in symbology the six-pointed star.

The planet Mercury is related to Virgo which is called a scientific feminine sign. It marks the digestive and assimilative powers of Cosmos, and is said to rule in the human body the solar plexus, stomach, and bowels. As the Cosmic Mother, Virgo, has always been the central figure of a number of myths, Isis, Ceres, personified her in ancient myth; followed in later times by the Virgin-Mother holding the Christ-child.

The ancient Zodiacs represented this sign as a woman holding a child in her arms. In the modern Zodiac an ear of wheat replaces the child. The beautiful star, Spica, shines from the wheat ear.

Jasper is the talismanic stone of Virgo; the opal, its gem. All cereals, especially wheat, are sacred to it.

The Hindus look upon Virgo as the Word become Speech.

Those born under the influence of this sign are generally endowed with gifts of speech.

T. S. ECHOES.

Meeting of the General Council.

The General Council met at the London Headquarters on the 27th of June, pursuant to notice from the President Founder, who took the chair and called the meeting to order at 3 p. m. The Indian, European and Australian Sections were respectively represented by Messrs. B. Keightley and G. R. S. Mead, General Secretaries, and A. P. Sinnett as proxy for J. C. Staples, General Secretary.

The Chair appointed Mr. Mead to act as Secretary to the meeting. He then, with a few prefatory words, read the following official communication.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, LONDON.
JUNE 27th, 1895.

To the General Council, T. S.

The undersigned hereby places before you a copy of his Executive Notice of June 5th inst., in which the separation of the American Section from the mother society is recognized; its Charter, those of all assenting Branches, and the diplomas of all members or Fellows who have voted for the Act of Secession, and declared the Theosophical Society to have had no existence, *de jure* since the 1878. The matter is before you for such action as you may see fit to take, under Sec. I of Art. VI., of the Rules.

H. S. OLCOTT, P. T. S.

It was then moved by Mr. Sinnett, seconded by Mr. B. Keightley, that the President's Executive Notice of June 5th, 1895, be approved and ratified by the General Council, and so notified to the Sections.

Carried unanimously.

The President then read a paper to the General Council in which he spoke of amending the Constitution so that it would provide for any crisis similar to that through which the Theosophical Society has just passed.

After other business the President Founder then announced the appointment of Mr. A. P. Sinnett to the office of Vice-President of the Society, to fill the present vacancy, and Mr. Sinnett having accepted the same, the Secretary was instructed to publish for general information the proceedings of the meeting. The General Council then adjourned *sine die*.

Executive Notice, T. S.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
ZUMARRAGA, SPAIN.
June 5th, 1895.

An official letter, of date May 2nd, 1895, from Mr. W. Q. Judge of New

York, to the undersigned, in which he signs as "President of the T. S. in America," communicates the following facts, *viz* :—

1. That the American Section of our Society has declared its "complete and absolute autonomy ;"
2. Has adopted the title of "The Theosophical Society in America ;"
3. Has elected Mr. Judge President for life, and Dr. J. D. Buck Vice-President ; and
4. Adopted a Constitution, by a majority of 181 votes, in a total ballot of 201 Branch and Councillors' votes, cast by Delegates representing 90 Branches in the Convention.

A verbatim report of the proceedings sent by Mr. Judge shows that the Convention adopted a Preamble to the Resolutions to the effect that "the different forms of organization through which *the body known as the 'Theosophical Society'* [the title being given as above printed—between inverted commas—apparently to indicate that the Convention does not recognize its validity] had passed since the year 1878, were solely the result of growth, and not of votes," * * * "and have been merely *de facto* and not *de jure*."

The only interpretation of the above acts and declaration which the undersigned, as one tolerably well acquainted with the constitutional and parliamentary procedure, is able to arrive at, is that the American Section, exercising its indisputable right, in lawful Convention assembled—

1. Voted to constitute itself a separate and completely autonomous Society, with its own title, constitution and by-laws, life-president and other officers ; and has thus as effectually broken its relation with the Theosophical Society as the United States of America did their colonial relation with Great Britain on July 4th, 1776.
2. Voted to consider the Theosophical Society as a body existing *de facto* and not *de jure* ; holding a name to which it is not really entitled, and having no constitutional jurisdiction over the Sections, Branches and Fellows in America and elsewhere, now holding its charters and diplomas.

Since, however, the Section, Branches and Fellows in question had recognized the Society's jurisdiction up to the date of the meeting of the Convention, and assembled as a part of the Society, and are still on our Headquarters' registers : and since the records cannot be altered save by the intervention of the President, it rests with the undersigned to issue the present Executive Notice for the information of the concerned ; thus completing the legal and constitutional separation from

the Society of the participating Officers, Branches and Fellows of the American Section, extinguishing the said Section itself, and recognizing it as a new Society, devoted to the same work as that which the mother Society has for so many years been prosecuting. As President, therefore, and official executive representative of the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, I do now declare and proclaim—

First—That the Charter heretofore granted by the undersigned, *viz.*, in the year 1886, for the formation and maintenance of the American Section, is hereby abrogated by virtue of the power given in Art. VII., Sect. 1, of the rules, and that from April 28th, 1895, the Section ceased to exist.

Second—All charters of Branches which in Convention voted for the said Act of Secession, or which may have or shall subsequently vote to adopt the same, are hereby annulled, and the recording Secretary is instructed to remove the names of said Branches from the roll kept at the Society's Headquarters, Adyar.

Third—The diplomas of all Fellows who have accepted or may in future accept for themselves and declare valid the said Act of Secession, are hereby cancelled; their holders cease, *ipso facto*, to be fellows of the Theosophical Society; and it shall be noted on the Society's Register that they withdrew themselves from membership on April 28th, or on such other date subsequently as may have marked their adhesion to the Act of Secession aforesaid.

Fourth—A certain number of Branches, Branch members and unattached Fellows of the Society in America, having refused to accept as binding upon them the said Act of Secession, and expressed their wish to continue their relations with the Society as heretofore, and the importance and necessity of organized action having been fully proved by experience, the undersigned gives notice:—

(a) That he will issue a new Charter for an American Section of the Theosophical Society, under the provisions of Art. VII., Sect. 1, 2, 4, and 5, and hereby confirms the validity of existing Charters of Branches, a majority of whose members have voted against accepting the Act of Secession aforesaid, or may change their votes after the date of the present instrument.

(b) To carry into effect the above notice, the undersigned appoints Alexander Fullerton, Esq., F. T. S., of New York, Mrs. Kate Buffington Davis, F. T. S., of Minneapolis, George E. Wright, Esq., F. T. S., of Chicago, and William John Walters, Esq., F. T. S., of San Francisco, a special Committee, to collect and forward to the undersigned all petitions and resolutions pertaining to this business, to have charge of all American

affairs pending the issue of a Section Charter, and as Presidential Agents to supervise the proper organization of the new American Section of the Theosophical Society.

The undersigned notes with regret that the American Convention was led into the adoption of the wholly false and misleading idea that the Theosophical Society now existing is not *de jure* the continuation of the Society, which was formed by H. P. B., the undersigned, and our colleagues, at New York in 1875, but an adventitious body, the growth of circumstances, and having no real corporate authority over its Sections and Branches. There is, however, at Adyar, the original Record Book of the proceedings of Council, in which, in Mr. Judge's own handwriting, and signed with the name of Mr. A. Gustam, the then Recording Secretary T. S., is written the report of a meeting of Council, held early in 1878, at which the President was given full discretionary powers to establish Headquarters wherever he chose, to adopt whatever measures he might see fit in the Society's interest, the council ratifying in advance whatever he might do. This record is unfortunately in India at this moment, but it has been written for and will be published at the earliest practicable date, for general information. It will then be seen how unsupported by facts is the record of the Society's history which was laid before the American Convention and before the counsellor-at-law whose professional opinion was obtained thereupon. When the Founders left New York for India, the undersigned, in an official order issued at London, in January, 1879, the text of which is preserved, *appointed* Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday, U. S A., F. T. S., his representative *pro tem.*, no definite plans for the future having then been formed. The members left at New York nominally held together for some years, but finally dropped out. In 1883 a few of them were gathered together by Mr. Judge, and, upon due application, a new Society was formed, and chartered as a Branch of the T. S. under the title of "The Aryan Theosophical Society." By virtue of its quasi-successorship, though in point of fact illegally, some of the original registers of the T. S. have been retained in that body. As a branch it was chartered and registered, has been regularly reported to Headquarters, and has paid to the Treasurer of the Society the lawful fees and dues of its members. Prior to this, however, charters had been granted by the undersigned to two other American Branches. As President-Founder, therefore, the undersigned declares that the Theosophical Society has had an unbroken existence from the date of its foundation in 1875 to the present day, and that every charter and diploma issued by it under its seal and over the President's signature has been valid and of constitutional force. The further declaration is officially made that, from the date of the passage of the above mentioned Act of Secession, the retention of the papers and

property of the late American Section, the continued use of the Theosophical Society's seal by the new Society, its Officers, Branches and Members, have been illegal; and on behalf of the Society the undersigned repudiates, as invalid, all new documents bearing the Society's Seal or his official signature. He also requests that the new Society's officers will turn over all Sectional archives and other property to the Special Committee herein above appointed.

Finally, the undersigned gives notice that Mr. W. Q. Judge, having by his own act lost his membership in the Society, is no longer its Vice-President, and the said office is now vacant.

While it would have been better if the work in hand could have been continued as heretofore in a spirit of unity and mutual reliance, yet the undersigned considers a separation like the present one was far more prudent than the perpetuation of ill-feeling and disunity within our ranks by causes too well known to need special reference. The undersigned offers to his late American colleagues his best private and official wishes for the prosperity, usefulness and honorable management of their new Society.

H. S. OLCOTT,

President-Founder of the Theosophical Society.

Theosophical Society.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,

LONDON, July 5th, 1895.

To George E. Wright, Esq., F. T. S.,

and other Presidents and Secretaries of Branches of the T. S.:

FRIENDS AND BROTHERS:—I am in receipt of your joint letter of June 1st asking to be officially recognized as the AMERICAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, and expressing your wish to appoint Mr. ALEXANDER FULLERTON Acting General Secretary.

It gives me pleasure to accede to your request; to say that in due course a regular charter will be issued to you in place of the one officially cancelled in my Executive Notice of June 5th ult., and to inform you that the instrument will be made to have effect from the date of the Act of Secession passed by the Boston Convention, viz., April 28th, 1895; thus presenting unbroken the continuity of the life of the Section.

You are authorized to work temporarily either under the old Rules of the Section or the Rules of the T. S. at pleasure, until you have submitted to me for ratification any amended form of Rules you and your colleagues may agree upon.

I heartily approve of your choice of Mr. FULLERTON for General Secretary *pro tem.*, and should be glad if his health should be good enough to permit him to continue in office.

On every account I should recommend the location of the Sectional Headquarters at Chicago, but you must, of course, use your own discretion in this matter.

Wishing you and your colleagues the most complete success, I am
yours fraternally,

H. S. OLCOTT, P. T. S.

European Section, T. S.

17 and 19 Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N. W.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
LONDON, July 10, 1895.

Alexander Fullerton, Esq.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER—I have the honor to transmit to you herewith a Resolution passed by the recent Convention of the European Section of the Theosophical Society, and beg to subscribe myself

Yours ever most sincerely and cordially,

G. S. R. MEAD.

Resolved, That this Convention tenders its most fraternal greeting to those Branches in America which have remained loyal to the original basis of the Theosophical Society and to the international principles of its organization; and transmits to them its most hearty and cordial congratulations upon their successful efforts to preserve and maintain an American Section of the Theosophical Society.

And this Convention expresses the hope that henceforward the words "The Theosophical Society, one and indivisible throughout the world," shall be our watchword and the symbol of our union.

Theosophical Society.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, LONDON,
June 27th, 1895.

Under the provisions of Art. IV., Sec. 6, I hereby appoint A. P. Sinnett of London to be Vice-President of the Society to fill the present vacancy

H. S. OLCOTT, P. T. S.

To the General Secretaries of Sections:

GENTLEMEN:—You are hereby requested to take the votes of you respective Sections upon the above nomination, and to communicate the results to me within the next three calendar months as prescribed in the By-Laws.

H. S. OLCOTT, P. T. S.

A Glance at the Section.

The appearance of the first number of MERCURY in its enlarged form and as the monthly magazine for American Theosophists follows closely upon the official recognition of the present American Section by the President-Founder T. S. Most certainly Theosophists need not, and do not, conceal their sorrow at the sad depletion of the Section in size and strength. It is no light thing to any Society that it should suddenly be reduced to about one-eleventh of its former membership, its records, property, appliances for work, stock of documents and circulars appropriated, its dignified position in the community impaired, and its influence on contemporary thought abated. No frank person should treat this otherwise than as a calamity. And it is very greatly intensified by the discouraging effect upon sincere men and women both within and without the Society itself. They ask whether the essential principle of Theosophy can really be true if it is unable to withstand a strain; whether unifying influences have the vigor claimed for them; whether the most cherished Theosophical doctrines have not been plunged in doubt; whether the hope of a richer moral and spiritual future for humanity through Theosophical motive is not a chimera. Calmly surveying the scene, a Theosophist freely admits the calamitous nature of all that has befallen the cause he loves, sees how no description can fully set forth the many and ramifying evils, and does not question that the best interests not only of the Society but of humanity have undergone a check which cannot be gauged and may operate for years. That all this should occur at the very time which H. P. B. warned against as especially critical, and that the movement should be imperilled at the very era when its conquests were becoming palpably important, adds to his grief and his humiliation.

Sadness, pain, discouragement, are inevitable, and they are strong in proportion as interest is strong. Yet they are not despair, and they should not induce it. Admitting to the very full all that the Cause has been bereft of in members, strength and devotion, conceding the injury to Theosophy, the Society, and mankind, there still remain facts which have a legitimately consolatory force.

One is that *the Society has vindicated its motto*. It has held that "there is no religion higher than Truth," by insisting that no influences of sentiment or public opinion or individual desire shall restrain it from honest attempt to arrive at facts, every claim inconsistent with solid verity to be rejected as opposed to its own motto. It has refused to stand before the public as sponsor for any theory or any name or any interpretation which cannot sustain itself in the sunlight and on the rock. And this gives it a claim to popular respect which will be verified with time.

Another is that *size is not the criterion of success*. The Theosophical Society at its foundation was small indeed, and feeble indeed. Even in April, 1886, it had but 9 branches in America—a smaller number than to-day. If in 9 years it increased those 9 branches to 102, why may not similar devotion produce similar results? For now, as then, the cause of growth is not existing volume, but the degree of vitality and vigor which pervades the organism and every atom of it.

A third is that *the section enjoys precisely the same reliances as heretofore*. Those Theosophists who believe that H. P. B. was prompted by Higher Powers to form the Theosophical Society as an agency in their spiritual work, and that they have since ever protected and aided it, must equally believe that the agency and the protection continue. The only difference is that this division of the Society is smaller than it was four months ago; but it is not smaller than it was in '86; and, anyhow, size is not the condition of Master's favor. It still has behind it this important backing, and it has also the power of its principle, the impulse of its mission and its doctrine, and all the forces which are ever sustaining truth, conscientious endeavor, and unselfish effort for impersonal good.

A fourth is that *set-backs, unless deserved, do not permanently impair a true mission*. If a meritorious cause is feebly or mistakenly or evilly promoted, Karmic forces must interfere, and until they are worked off and a reform is made no great progress is possible. But when such is not the case, where sincerity and energy and devotion rule, those forces are on the side of the organization. Injuries may temporarily retard or even cripple, but they cannot kill or permanently paralyze. Recovery is assured.

A fifth is that *the American Section has the cordial sympathy and fraternal support of all other parts of the T. S.* Kindly messages of cheer come across the waters, assurances of interest in the great Theosophic Cause now in so few and feeble hands, words of encouragement and hope and aid from the other Sections and from brethren in Theosophy over the world. It is a privilege to represent Theosophy in these vast United States; it is a stimulus to know that we are not alone, that we have helpful thought and cordial benediction from the rest of the Theosophical band.

A sixth is that the American Section is aiding to effectuate H. P. B.'s hope that the T. S. should live "on into and through the 20th century," and her dying adjuration to "keep the link unbroken." Happily unbroken it is as yet, for the Sections are united, the membership harmonious, and regard for the Teacher universal. To contribute to her aim is to secure the support of herself and of those she represented.

And so the condition of our Section to-day is neither helpless nor hope-

less. It has a great work before it; yet a work which may be accomplished if every member realizes its greatness, recalls the facts which nevertheless make it possible, and puts forth the energy which will make it certain.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

BOOK REVIEWS.

Bhagavad Gita.

Annie Besant deserves credit for her labor in preparing for students a cheap and accurate translation of the Bhagavad Gita and for the luminous key to the meaning of the poem in the delightful preface. Whether this recondite version will become of widespread helpfulness to "the aspirants in East and West" to whom it is dedicated will be demonstrated by time. It is not apt to supersede the older; for just as Bible sayings learned in childhood often lie hidden tenderly in the heart through life, so we are apt to love that form of "The Lord's Song" which first raised the aspirations to the calm of wisdom, and so Arnold's musical rhythm, or some statelier version long latent, may burst forth in Memory's song some time when the soul needs the guidance.

Granted that the purpose of translation, like original speech, is to convey a spiritual idea, thus it will often necessitate changing the idiom of the original into metaphor nearest the meaning in the new tongue. The first impression from this latest effort is the strong Oriental setting, as if it were the work of a Sanscrit scholar whose knowledge of English was not thorough. The number of Sanscrit nouns employed requires the study of a glossary.

If English is deficient in metaphysical and spiritual nomenclature it is because the nation lacks such ideas, for the vocabulary of a language is an index to the involution of the race, and only by gradual education can we grasp the conception embodied in a foreign word. So, it is better to choose an expression as near as possible to the thought rather than sacrifice intelligibility for the many to scholarly exactitude for the few. Will all Theosophists even quickly understand sentences like this "With Manas wandering away from Yoga"?

The stern moral tone of the verse, "It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's well," is lost by substituting "dharma" for "Duty." Nor does the constant use of the word Brahman give as mystical and impersonal suggestion as "the Supreme Spirit." Neither is "asterisms" as strong as "solar system."

It has sometimes been a jest at Theosophical writers that they coin un-

necessary words, and this little book is guilty of this sin against literary good taste—noticeably “renounca,” in the name of Chapter Fifth. “Unwisdom,” and such phrases as “formative willings” and “a harmonized man” surprise the mind; the construction of many sentences is obscure, appearing interrogative or being similar to German syntax, and the verb is frequently in ellipsis. These peculiarities, with the reiteration of Sanscrit names, makes the road of comprehension very rocky to an ordinary reader.

Chapter Eleventh is an exception. There is a grand swing to these stanzas, and noble and poetic is the Invocation of Arjuna to Krishna at the vision of the Divine (here called Universal) Form.

For a different opinion by comparison with former versions see Mr. Mead’s article in August *Lucifer*.

It would be a valuable help to all interested in this priceless poem to elucidate vague points in familiar volumes by these exact renderings, thus neglecting no intellectual aid to that Higher Wisdom which comes from the action of the Discriminating Principle. E. S.

Studies in Occultism. 6 Vols.

A Series of Reprints from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. New England Theosophical Corporation, 24 Mt. Vernon St., Boston. Price 35 cts. each; \$1.50 for the six.

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The publishers are doing excellent work in collecting these most valuable instructions from the inspired pen of our Teacher H. P. B., and in placing them within the reach of every student. These little volumes will be a boon to all lovers of the Secret Wisdom, for they make of themselves a complete Occult Library. M. A. W.


Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell:
'Tis virtue makes the bliss, where'er we dwell.

—Collins.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

 OUR little MERCURY, who a year ago was an infant in long clothes, has rapidly passed through the stages of boyhood and youth. His influence has waxed accordingly, until his words and messages are read and loved from England to Australia.

To-day he dons a new garb ; he is a full-grown man, and wields his caduceus with the same manly vigor which characterized him when he taught the Wisdom-seekers in the shady groves of Athens, or still further back in Time, when he walked by the mighty Nile and directed the legions of the Pharaohs as they marched in solid phalanx against the enemies of Supernal Light.

You know that Mercury, when only a few hours old, stole the cows of his brother Apollo. Doubtless, you have read the story and laughed well over Mercury's cunning ; for he put on his shoes backwards so that his footprints seemed to go in the opposite direction, and nobody suspected this tiny rogue of being the thief.

Well, every little boy and girl is a new-born Mercury, and if all will bravely follow their own karmic footprints they will reach their Father's home ; *i. e.*, their Higher Self. Then the soul's memory will lead them back to the time when Thebes and Athens resounded with the clash of armed heroes.

Your little baby brother was, perhaps, a Hermes Trismegistus in his day, and has already begun to appropriate to himself the cows ; *i. e.*, the Karma of his big brother Apollo, who is his own personality of that time. See how he fights in his mother's arms, and tries to make himself heard above the voices of his parents. Perhaps when he htoas slen all the forty cows—that is, the first forty years of his life which were required by ancient law to constitute an adult—he will be a mighty champion in the cause of Theosophy.

You will see that Mercury points out the way with the caduceus in his right hand, while his left leans on a curious pillar with three faces, and upon them a box with a flame issuing from the top.

These pillars were called *Hermæ* by the Greeks, who regarded them with great veneration; they were to them what the cross is to the Christians—the symbol which directs the thoughts to the Divine way of Life.

Hermæ were placed by the Greeks at the places where roads divided, pointing the way; also by the doors of their houses. Sometimes the box on the top was a fountain to quench the thirst of the weary traveler. From these pillars there grew up that beautiful idea among the Gnostics, of the Redeemer of the world, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and who gives freely to the pilgrim, the water of Life that he shall not die.

The pillar has three faces, which indicate the vision of the past, present, and future. The first, which is that of a bearded old man, looks back into the misty East where Horus-Apollo rests on the Horizon.

The second face is that of a laughing satyr, gay and joyous in the light and heat of the meridian sun. This aspect is a true type of man in the giddy whirl of life, little recking of the precious hours which are fleeting by never to come again; of precious duties neglected, a loss never to be repaired; a gaiety which will soon merge into sadness, when he will bitterly repent of his folly and sin in neglecting to catch the fleeting opportunities for duty as they sped on their way.

But it is not in the direction of these that Mercury points. Oh, no, indeed, my readers. We are young and ardent; we bound forward in our mission of life, you and I, it is the future, that flower-strewn path of golden possibilities, our future home, the centre of the Mystic Light, gilded with the dazzling rays of the setting sun.

Here will we work together in the cause of Truth as together we worked in the days of old. The bright young face on the west side of the pillar is yours and mine—the face of all who look to the future with hope and cheerfulness in their hearts, ready and willing to do their duty in the cause of Love, Truth, and Beauty, and in their endeavor to assist their fellows in the path of Life—to “*Point out the Way.*”

RAMAH KERU.

SELF-RELIANCE.

ONCE upon a time a child wandered away and fell into a deep pit, where it was dark and he could hear the growls of wild beasts. In his terror he looked this way, and that, and struggled to get out, but the walls met him at every turn; they were smooth, and straight, and high. There seemed no way out but to cut steps in the rock in the hope of having strength to climb to the top. He proceeded to cut the steps, and had nearly reached the top, when a crowd of people, seeing him, began shouting to him: "Hold on, we will help you. Stand still, we will reach you." He dropped the blade from his weary fingers, and gathered his energies to cling close to the rock till friends should reach him.

They continued to shout, but they had no rope, no method, and their earnestness but increased their confusion. The turmoil came to his ears like the warring of beasts.

He had let go of his one means of escape, and his friends could not help him! He loosened his hold and fell to the bottom, where he lay moaning in great distress—in pain from the fall and in fear of the wild beasts, whose roarings had not lessened. But though the beasts were roaring he could not see them, and as he listened more intently he began to think that, maybe, the sound was not of beasts after all! With some effort he crawled through the slime of the pit, found the worn blade that he had dropped, and then discovered light appearing through an aperture not far beyond him. He made his way to it and found an opening large enough for him to enter. He followed it, and soon came out into a broad, green meadow where a group of children were shouting and laughing in play. It was this that he heard in the pit, and terror made him imagine the sounds to be the roars of beasts.

The children welcomed him into their group, and when he told them his adventure they gave him the name of "Self-Reliance."

LYDIA BELL.

LOTUS CIRCLES.

WHOEVER realizes the power of early impressions on the human mind will certainly desire to impress upon the plastic mind of youth true, beautiful, and healthful pictures of Life.

If the study of Theosophy has brought order out of chaos in our individual lives, why not let it be a guide to children? The spiritual life of the young people of to-day wanes for lack of nourishment. Their school training makes them laugh at dogma. The roar of material life soon overpowers the small voice that speaks within of the Real; unless they learn to hear the Real in every voice—to see *It* in every form.

A Law of Life or Religion based on mere assumption, or even on the idea of the Greatest Good, is not sufficient. But if the youthful mind be led to trace every natural process back to its source in the *One*; if the persistence of Force be carried into the mental and moral world; if the continuity of conscious life be made a vivid reality, then the true Law of Life, or essential religion, becomes a part of being and Religion is Science.

To supply this unifying element to the education of to-day is the work of the Lotus Circles. They are not formed for the inculcation of dogma, but for the search for Truth.

They are not for the fostering of sentimental piety, but for the development of altruistic love—the love which radiates from the divine Krishna, or Christ, who dwells within the heart of every one.

Children are natural Theosophists; that is, they incline to the God-Wisdom. To them the stone is alive—consciously alive. They note correspondences better than do older people. The Law of Periodicity or Rhythmic cycles is easily grasped by young minds. They vibrate to it as they vibrate to the music and dance.

Now, an understanding of this law with its correlates (action and reaction), leads directly to a realization of Reincarnation and Karma. Here is a scientific base for right living.

Or if nothing else save the “Power of Thought” be talked and inculcated at the meetings, think what a help it would be to the coming generation! Thoughts are Forces that may create Things. Here is a practical gospel in a few words.

Our co-workers who have had experience in the practical work of Lotus Circles all agree that the lesson proper should be very short; a picture, a story, a flower, may serve as a base. Nature offers beautiful ideals. The leaves, the wind, the crystals, the geode, the tree, the daisy, the rose, the dew-drop, the star—all have messages for those who know how to read them.

Object lessons are always excellent. A wide-awake teacher will devise many an interesting lesson to bring the Eternal Laws vividly and practically before the young minds.

The exercises published last year in MERCURY, by Miss Bell, have proven excellent. Their peculiar charm lies in their action. The children are moving nearly all the time.

A Lotus Circle needs songs. If one had to choose between lessons and song, take the song. But the song should be good and true. Seeds are sown more easily in song than in any other way. The musical rhythm causes the impression to be much more vivid and lasting. Hence the great evil of sad or fearful song pictures.

To those unaccustomed to teaching, we recommend a story. Children love a story, and it will always create discussion. Discussion is the desired end; for our young folks do not come to Lotus Circles to be taught, but to teach—to teach themselves, each other—yes, and the teachers, too.

But there should be no teachers in a Lotus Circle. Centers? Yes. Everywhere in the cosmos we find centers. Some call centers leaders. Points of attraction and radiation would be a preferable name, for humanity suffers from too much teaching and leading. Wherever possible, a few breathing exercises and Delsartean movements should be introduced. They harmonize the physical to the higher planes of thought; and a Lotus Circle links together all the planes.

Many have asked for an order of exercises. One is here given which may serve as a suggestion to those who are diffident of their own judgment in ordering classes:

1. Opening Song.
2. Presenting Flowers. "Each one gives of his gift." In other words, the Roll Call, when each one recites a verse or gives a flower, etc.
3. Song.
4. Breathing Exercises, Games, or March.
5. Song or Recitation.
6. Lessons, Questions, Discussions, Business.
7. Gathering Bouquet for the coming week. Each one tells

some one idea gathered during exercises that may be of use during the week.

8. Giving out lessons for the next week.

9. Song.

Dismissal.

NOTE—Theosophical students interested in the success of Lotus Circles are earnestly invited to send to the Editor any items, whether lessons, stories, games, puzzles or suggestions that may be of use in the children's work. All our *young readers* are urged to send us questions, answers to questions, letters, etc. "Work with a will and work altogether," is our watchword.—[ED.]

AIDS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN JUNE NUMBER.

No. 50.—The Book of the Dead was so called because it described the passage of the disembodied soul to the judgment of Osiris. A copy of it was always placed in the sarcophagus of the mummy.

51.—Karma means action, not acts; hence, Karma does not require that any act, such as murder, be exactly repeated in another incarnation. It is the passion, the violence, the hatred that culminated in the act, the injustice and pain caused by it, that will afflict the soul and bring it into sad, painful darkness. A cruel murder in one incarnation might react in another in the way of making the person work out that Karma an object of dislike—a victim of cruelty and injustice.

53.—We shall know when we get there, and not before. Suppose your baby sister should ask you what line of study you would take up after graduating from Harvard, Oxford, or Jena, could you explain it to her? Would you know yourself?

54.—Wisdom signifies the guidance of truth; treachery, guidance of falsehood. They are the two poles of the same magnet, or center. That center is *Mind evolving in Time* and symbolized by the serpent. Different ages have taken different poles, that is all.

55.—Because the vibrating substance of that person's aura comes in contact with ours. The feeling produced is translated into a thought.

56.—That will depend very much upon what we love in this life. If we love Theosophy now, we shall be attracted, in our next incarnation, to parents who cherish the Wisdom Religion. It may not be called Theosophy then.

NEW QUESTIONS.

No. 1.—What is the meaning of the Lotus Flower?

2.—Is a Chinaman a brother, and in what way?

3.—Please explain Pralaya.

4.—Do ugly thoughts make ugly faces, and how?

5.—Have animals souls?

6.—Do animals think?

MEETINGS AND CLASSES.

San Francisco.

The Children's Hour, or Lotus Circle, meets every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, at Mystic Hall, Union Square Hall Building, 421 Post Street. All children are invited.

Golden Gate Lodge of The Theosophical Society meets every Wednesday at 8 P. M., in Mystic Hall, Union Square Hall Building, 421 Post Street. Strangers and inquirers earnestly invited.

A Class for the study of the Bhagavad Gita meets every Sunday at 11 A. M., in the same Hall.

—That speech which unites usefulness with sweetness diminishes evil and increases virtue. That speech which, while imparting benefits, ceases not to please, bears earthly, bears celestial fruit. Sweet speech with a cheerful countenance surpasses the gift of the most prosperous.—*Hindu*.

—An innocent nature could hate nothing that was innocent; in a word, so great is the commutation that the soul then hated only that which now only it loves, i. e., sin.—*South*.

—Each soul is worth so much on change
And mark'd, like sheep, with figures.

—*Mrs. Browning*.